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Crime prevention and criminal justice

Letter dated 7 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the information regarding the measures being taken in the Republic of Uzbekistan to combat the trafficking in human beings (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 67 and 98.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 7 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on measures taken in Uzbekistan to combat human trafficking

Uzbekistan considers the issue of human trafficking to be one of the most urgent problems on the international agenda and is taking all the necessary measures at the national and regional levels to combat this form of transnational organized crime.

Under existing Uzbek legislation, the recruitment of persons for exploitation is a criminal offence: article 135 of the Uzbek Criminal Code covers the recruitment of persons for exploitation and the recruitment of persons by means of deception for sexual or other forms of exploitation.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the national body responsible for carrying out measures to combat human trafficking and to prevent the illegal migration of Uzbek nationals to foreign countries for the purposes of employment.

Recently, the law enforcement agencies of Uzbekistan have increasingly often detected cases of trafficking of women and men to destination countries for the purposes of sexual exploitation and the slave trade. In a significant number of cases, persons involved in human trafficking organize the departure of Uzbek citizens through neighbouring States. This is facilitated by the virtual openness of Uzbekistan's borders to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and by the increased migration flows within Uzbekistan and among States.

Criminal groups use various methods (such as the promise of opportunities for study or of well-paid jobs) to recruit persons for the mercenary purpose of selling them subsequently as human merchandise. Most of the victims of such trafficking come from the most vulnerable segments of the population: women and girls. The search for a better life is one of the reasons compelling people to leave their permanent place of residence.

In view of the urgency of the problem and the need for effective joint action on the part of the national law enforcement agencies and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations to combat human trafficking, Uzbekistan is making consistent efforts to develop and implement a range of measures in that area.

In accordance with a decision of the Board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 26 February 2004, a special unit, the department to combat human trafficking, was established within the Ministry's General Directorate for Criminal Investigations and Counter-Terrorism, with branches in all the regions of Uzbekistan.

Currently under consideration is the establishment of a working group with the participation of representatives of law enforcement agencies, Parliament, NGOs and

local government bodies to coordinate efforts to prevent human trafficking and to draft a national plan of action to combat human trafficking.

For the purpose of establishing stricter administrative and legal mechanisms to combat human trafficking, provision has been made to introduce the relevant amendments and additions to the Criminal Code and to stiffen the penalties for human trafficking.

Measures are being taken to establish a single database for use in combating transnational organized crime, including human trafficking. Such a database would be used in particular for information exchange with other countries on this issue.

Particular attention is being given to consistent incorporation of the provisions of the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and other relevant international legal standards into the national legislation of Uzbekistan.

The Republic of Uzbekistan considers that the effectiveness of efforts to combat human trafficking can be ensured not only through the implementation of the necessary measures at the national and regional levels but also through increased international cooperation in this area, in particular by elaborating a global strategy to combat human trafficking.